



SPORTS | B1

EBB AND FLOW

Alabama hoping to keep its winning streak going



WORSHIP | A6

SHINING HIS LIGHT

Figure skater's faith helped her return to ice after frightening illness

The Gadsden Times

Saturday, February 17, 2018 150 YEARS OF SERVING THE GREATER GADSDEN AREA | @gadsdentimes | Facebook.com/GadsdenTimes | \$1

Find us on all platforms 24/7

gadsdentimes.com

FBI: Failed to investigate tip on shooting suspect



A young girl and a woman embrace Friday as they leave a funeral service for Alyssa Alhadeff at the Star of David Funeral Chapel in North Lauderdale, Fla. Alhadeff was one of the victims of Wednesday shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. [BRYNN ANDERSON/AP]

FBI received tip that shooter had a ‘desire to kill’

By Kelli Kennedy, Curt Anderson and Tamara Lush
The Associated Press

PARKLAND, Fla. — The FBI received a tip last month that the suspect in the Florida school shooting had a “desire to kill” and access to guns and could be plotting an attack, but agents failed to investigate, the agency said Friday. Florida Gov. Rick Scott called for the FBI director to resign because of the agency’s failure.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions said the shooting that killed 17 people Wednesday was a “tragic consequence” of the FBI’s missteps and ordered a review of the Justice Department’s processes. He said it’s now clear that the nation’s premier law enforcement

See FBI, A9



A bicyclist rides between the memorial crosses at Pine Trails Park in Parkland, Fla., Friday. The crosses were placed for the victims of the Wednesday shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. [AMY BETH BENNETT/SOUTH FLORIDA SUN-SENTINEL]

Investigators probe alleged threats at Hokes Bluff

Sheriff urges people if they see something, say something

By Donna Thornton
Times Staff Writer

The Etowah County Sheriff’s Office fielded calls after the Florida school shooting questioning an incident reported Jan. 24 at Hokes Bluff High School, Sheriff Todd Entrekin said.

Entrekin and Chief Deputy Michael Barton said law

enforcement got involved after there were reports that a high school student had threatened harm to others.

“When investigators and the school resource officer started interviewing students, they couldn’t find anyone who actually heard a threat being made,” Entrekin said.

About three weeks ago, he said, investigators charged a Hokes Bluff juvenile with making a terrorist threat after an unrelated incident.

After this week’s school shooting in Florida, where 17 people were killed by a former student, Entrekin said people started calling again about the Jan. 24 incident, and questioning why nothing was done with the student.

Entrekin said the juvenile’s locker was searched, he was searched and a visit was made to his home, and nothing was found to warrant acting action against him.

“We’re talked to numerous students,” he said. “Not

a one can say they heard him say he was going to do anything.”

The rumor mill continues to churn, Entrekin said, and investigators will pursue any information received.

Friday afternoon, the sheriff’s office began investigating a reported call made to a Walgreen’s in Limestone County, threatening that “something would happen” at Hokes Bluff High School’s prom.

See THREATS, A9

Butler presents school board bill

By Donna Thornton
Times Staff Writer

The much debated subject of a referendum on an elected school board for the City of Gadsden made its way to Montgomery Thursday.

Rep. Mack Butler, R-Rainbow City, introduced a bill that would let the people of Gadsden vote on whether they favor electing school board members, rather than having a board appointed by members of the City Council.

When the bill was first advertised it drew fire from the council — much more than he ever anticipated, Butler said. So he amended the bill to remove an element that raised questions: it originally called for seven board members elected from districts, with a chairman elected at-large.

The re-tooled bill — advertised at his own expense, Butler said — sets out a vote for a seven-member board, voted on by districts.

The bill is now in the Local Legislation Committee, awaiting the signatures of the rest of the local delegation.

Butler said he doesn’t know

See BUTLER, A9

Russians charged with meddling in election

By Eric Tucker
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Thirteen Russians, including a businessman close to Vladimir Putin, were charged Friday in an elaborate plot to interfere in the 2016 U.S. presidential election through social media propaganda, aimed in part at helping Republican Donald Trump and harming the prospects of his Democratic opponent, Hillary Clinton.

The federal indictment, brought by the office of special counsel Robert Mueller, represents the most direct allegation to date of illegal Russian meddling during the campaign that sent Trump to the White House. It also marks the first criminal charges against Russians believed to have secretly worked to influence the outcome.

See RUSSIANS, A9